

# FROM PAST TO PRESENT: HERITAGE AND CONFLICT; MODERN PROMENADES IN THE ACROPOLIS

*Del pasado al presente: patrimonio y conflicto;  
modernos paseos en la Acrópolis*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper wishes to inspect views towards heritage in periods of conflict. The aim is to compare how notions over heritage monuments are renegotiated during periods of war and other conflict situations. An example for this examination will be the monument of the Acropolis, one of the most profound symbols of World Heritage. The analysis will follow two directions: the theoretical analysis of every different viewpoint in selected case studies and their comparison to reveal the complexity of the issue of heritage, in various periods of modern history.

One case study will be the battle of Athens by the Greeks (March 1822), when the besiegers avoided to attack the Acropolis to save the Parthenon, while some Athenians entreated them to destroy the Acropolis -the place where the Ottoman military lurked (Voutier 1823). Their suggestion was that after the establishment of the Greek state, the new sculptors and architects would cover the loss. The second example will be the battle of Athens (December 1944), one of the first incidents that led to the Greek Civil War. During this fight the monuments of the Acropolis were used as a stronghold by the E.D.E.S. (National Democratic Greek Association) alongside the British allies that came to its aid against E.A.M. (National Liberation Front). During this civil war conflict the perception of heritage gave way to an interpretation of the hill as a strategic vantage point. The third example will be placed at the end of the conflict, in the imminent period afterwards. The use of the World Heritage site as a means of conversion for the defeated of the Civil War, towards the new national narrative. The actual locus point is transferred to the exile island of Makronissos, in which the material replicas of the Parthenon and other monuments lay, examples of another use of the monuments in periods of conflict. By revealing this constantly changing and perpetually renegotiated views on heritage, the question of heritage could be approached from a different viewpoint. It could be argued that in periods of conflict, heritage becomes valuable and elusive at the same time. What in times of peace would be interpreted as heritage, it is considered otherwise in conflicted situations... The paper wishes to suggest that the promotion of such attitudes in heritage narrations could be considered as a valuable addition to the discussion.

**Key words:** heritage and conflict; changing notions; Greek Identities.

## RESUMEN

*Este documento quiere inspeccionar vistas hacia patrimonio en periodos de conflicto. El objetivo es comparar cómo se renegocian las nociones sobre patrimonio monumental durante los periodos de guerra y otras situaciones de conflicto. Un ejemplo para este examen será el monumento de la Acrópolis, uno de los símbolos más profundos del patrimonio mundial. El análisis seguirá dos direcciones: un análisis teórico de cada punto de vista diferente en los estudios de caso seleccionados y su respectiva comparación para revelar la complejidad de la cuestión de la herencia, en varios periodos de la historia moderna. Un caso de estudio será la batalla de Atenas por los griegos (marzo de 1822), cuando los sitiadores evitaron atacar la Acrópolis para salvar el Partenón, mientras algunos atenienses les rogaron para destruir la Acrópolis-el lugar donde escondía el ejército otomano (Voutier 1823). La idea era que después de la creación del estado griego, los nuevos escultores y arquitectos cubrirían la pérdida. El segundo ejemplo será la batalla de Atenas (diciembre de 1944), uno de los primeros incidentes que condujeron a la Guerra Civil griega. Durante esta lucha monumentos como la Acrópolis, se utilizaron como una fortaleza por la E.D.E.S. (Asociación Nacional Democrática Griega) junto a los aliados británicos que acudieron en su ayuda contra el E.A.M (frente de liberación nacional). Durante esta guerra civil la percepción del patrimonio dio paso a una interpretación de la colina como un punto de vista estratégico. El tercer ejemplo se situará al final del conflicto, en el inminente periodo de secuela. El uso del sitio que es patrimonio mundial, como medio de conversión para los vencidos en la Guerra Civil, hacia la nueva narrativa nacional. El punto del lugar actual es transferido a la isla de exilio de Makronissos, en donde se encuentra el material de las réplicas del Partenón y otros monumentos, como ejemplos de uso de monumentos en los periodos de conflicto. Al revelar este cambio constante y puntos de vista continuamente renegociados sobre el patrimonio, la cuestión del patrimonio podría ser abordada desde una óptica diferente. Se podría sostener que en periodos del conflicto, la herencia se hace valiosa y evasiva al mismo tiempo. Lo que en tiempos de paz sería interpretada como una herencia, se considera lo contrario en situaciones de conflicto. El artículo desea sugerir que la promoción de tales actitudes en narraciones de herencia se podrían considerar como una adición valiosa a la discusión.*

**Palabras clave:** patrimonio y conflicto; nociones de cambio; Identidades griegas.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The fear of a young researcher towards the limitless number of papers and ink dedicated to the monument of the Acropolis had to be surpassed in order to make the decision to present a paper. There was a stronghold of spreading doubt that there could be anything more to contribute to the existing research. However, it is intended to reveal some notions related to this monument, which may have been neglected or never reconciled with the one portraying Acropolis as the locus point, where the spirit of classical Greece, created the Parthenon, a building which is considered the 'vessel' that communicates the spirit of democracy to the modern world. The latter idea is also mentioned in the criteria of monuments selection, for the UNESCO catalogue (1987): «The Acropolis is directly and tangibly associated with events and ideas which have never faded over the course of history. Its monuments are still living testimonies of the teachings of Plato and Aristotle... and the preachings of St. Paul». With the examples presented here, it is intended to scratch another surface; that of historical interpretation of the architectural monuments and the different conclusions they may produce, in the interpretive field of Heritage.

But why the Acropolis? The choice is conscious yet dangerous, because of the esteem it holds in Greek and international society. It is this worldwide acceptance of the monument that will generate the discussion for what is about to be suggested. Moreover its importance as an architectural ensemble is uncontested throughout history, either in the form of the classical Parthenon temple, or under new forms such as the Byzantine church or the Mosque that Parthenon was transformed to in subsequent periods. From Pausanias, the Greek wanderer of the 2nd century AD, to the Eastern Roman emperor Basil the 2nd who arrived to pray at the Parthenon church after his victory over the Bulgarians in the 11th century AD. Not least, Evliya Çelebi, the Ottoman wanderer who praises the Parthenon's Mosque as one of the most beautiful in the world, when he visited Athens in 1667 AD (Stoneman 2004). These few examples, amongst many others, contribute to the discussion by revealing that in each of the phases of the Acropolis -be it as Pagan, Christian or Muslim- it was considered a monumental structure and its beauty was beyond contest. These transformations were not always peaceful and the only characteristic omnipresent in the historical *longue durée* is that the hill of Acropolis had always been mostly of a religious character. A few examples will be evoked in order to consider attitudes towards the monument in periods of conflict. The aim is to investigate this relationship between heritage and conflict. The example of the Acropolis is particular because it was considered a monument or at least a valued and respected area, even from antiquity, before legislation for the protection of monuments became a matter of the state in modern Greece and international institutions.

The emergence of the discussion is placed during the war of Greek Independence, followed by a brief discussion related to the role of the Parthenon and the antiquities in the process that led to the formation of the Greek nation state. Next consideration will be the role and interpretation of the Acropolis in the beginning of the Greek Civil War, in December 1944. The third example will be the one of a different notion related to the Acropolis during modern history. The «other Parthenon», the reflection of the Heritage Site in the political prisoner camps of Makronissos (Hamilakis 2002). The uttermost historical stop will be the 4th century BC, the period that the original Parthenon was built and a brief historical investigation will take place in order to create a holistic historical context. Finally the discussion will turn to issues of heritage interpretation and conflicted ideologies. The notions about to be presented exist only when putting forward the historical context, distanced from the architectural features of the monument, or its everlasting symbolisms, aiming to understand the notions created towards it within a specific framework of time.

## 2. ATHENS, MARCH 1822 (PICTURE 1)



Image 1: P. Zografos and I. Makrygiannis: *View of the Siege of Athens; the takeover of the 3 Serpente wells*. Athens, National Historical Museum. {Source: *History of the Greek Nation*, vol. 12, 1975: 227}



During the first steps of the Greek War of Independence, the issue of holding antiquities in high esteem and considering them as proof of legitimization of the newly built nation-state, began to come under construction. The upper class and European Philhellenes shared these notions. However such cultural arguments did not hold stock with the masses. As a result antiquities were not considered by all as a resource to be saved at any cost. Furthermore, most of the interest concerning the ancient Greek past was related to the ancient sources and literature, not the antiquities themselves (Tolias 2014).

The case of an event at the Siege of Athens in March 1822 is an eloquent example. Based on the written memories of Voutier, a French Colonel who was the leader of the Greek and Philhellenic besiegers of Athens against the Ottoman garrison, we are able to define four different attitudes towards the monuments of the Acropolis. Voutier's personal attitude was that of an educated French who belonged in a family of high status. He was raised alongside the values of romanticism. To the Colonel, Acropolis was the most sacred ruin of classical antiquity, a proud monument according to his own testimony (Voutier 1823: 226). Furthermore, following his memoirs, we encounter the belief of some Athenians, who were filled with shame and pain, as the Ottomans were inside Parthenon and the true heirs of the place were cast out into the mountains in order to survive. During the siege, two canons arrived from Corinth as aid to the struggle for the recuperation of Athens. Alongside them came a message from a Greek minister of the revolution, Ioannis Kolettis. In this letter, Kolettis presents to Voutier the formal Greek view regarding the Acropolis:

«The takeover of Athens will bring you glory... But do not forget that inside the fortress rests the precious antiquities that time was unable to destroy;... We hope that the Aegis of Minerva saves her temple» (Voutier 1823: 239).

It is obvious that Kolettis recognises that the Acropolis at present is a stronghold, but according to his view, this fact is temporary, a result of the conflict, that would change after the resolution.

The above three attitudes seem to share, up to an extent, the same values. Although Voutier's and Kolettis's opinions can be placed certainly on the spheres of romanticism and neoclassicism they diverge as to the vague identification of the Athenians, fighting in the mountains. This identity is less certain and could be derived from the romantic spirit of the Colonel. The fourth approach towards the Acropolis is the most peculiar one. In this part of the text Voutier cites the words of the people in direct speech, in what seems to be an essay to give value and credit to their voices. He describes the conversation as follows:

«Haven't we (the Athenians) got women, children and fathers? They languish in exile and misery, death and menaces from all sides!... Regarding these monuments of our ancestors, sacrifice them if you must, in order to win our liberty, which will bring us our new monuments» (Voutier 1823: 239).

This passage eloquently reveals that a portion of the indigenous people of Athens were regarding the Acropolis as a minor subject if related to their freedom and survival. It also underlies the belief that being free provides a nation with the means to create masterpieces from the beginning, not relying on a past virtue in order to sustain itself in the future. The important notion to grasp here is that a portion of the Greek population were unwilling to die protecting what would be revealed in the following years as their nation's pride.

It is clear that these attitudes are conflicting. Voutier, Kolletis and the first group of Athenians were infused with the romantic spirit of Western Europe. Their belief regarding the value of the Acropolis to civilisation, would never allow them to bombard Acropolis. On the other hand, the second group of Athenians would like to see its own people saved, even if the price was to bombard the monument. As a result it is obvious that, if Voutier's statement is valid -and we have no reason to doubt it- we are in front of two different ontologies. One that accepts Acropolis as a semi-sacred place, almost analogous to that of heritage interest and another that presents Acropolis as the locus point having the potential to stop a massacre. The paradox lies within the fact that it was the indigenous people who demanded the destruction of what is now the most profound symbol of Greekness and Democracy, while a French Colonel was the one who denied its dismantling. In order to support the importance of the second ontology, it is worth noting that the reaction of the early Greek historiography towards the matter is dubious. In a Greek edition of the memories of Voutier (Protopsalits 1957) the fourth attitude, as revealed above is not mentioned, obviously censored for the sake of the national narrative. Placing this absence in the context of cultural heritage, we unravel the perception that heritage shapes the national character (Silberman 2015), a belief that is valuable as an interpretive tool related to this discussion.

By the 11th of March 1822, the canons started to bombard the perimeter of the Acropolis. Placed in another place of heritage interest, at the hill of Pnyx, they were aiming towards the slopes of the Acropolis, trying to cut off the supplies of the Ottomans. While doing so, many citizens were kissing Voutier's hands, even if he did not destroy the Acropolis but just bombarded its hillside (Voutier 1823: 240). The siege held for months and the French powers abandoned the city when it became obvious that the fort was about to fall definitively in a matter of days. Eventually the Ottomans surrendered it in June.

### 3. ATHENS, DECEMBER 1944

The second example lies 122 years forward in time. In the fall of 1944 the German occupational troops had just left Athens and the debate over which party was going to dominate in the political world of Greece had begun. On the one side there was the popular forces of E.A.M. (National Liberation Front), known for their left and communist ideals, on the other hand lied the force of E.D.E.S (National Democratic Hellenic Association) with the support of the British forces. They were prepared, according to Winston Churchill, to do everything to prevent a communist victory in Greece (Churchill 1955: 254).

The government in the form of a «National Unity» coalition that was created with members of E.A.M and E.D.E.S under the leadership of George Papandreou, did not rise up to the challenge, at least as the side of E.A.M had envisioned. The events led to the start of the Greek Civil War. On the 3rd of December 1944, a huge and peaceful E.A.M demonstration, turned into bloodshed as the gendarmerie of Athens and British soldiers opened fire against the unarmed civilians. Many unarmed citizens died that day, and this was the beginning of another battle for Athens, on which the Acropolis played a prominent role.

This heritage site, from the establishment of the Greek nation-state onwards passed through many phases. Excavations and «purifications» took place, by destroying most of the postclassical architectural remains to reveal the white glory of the Classical period. The site became a symbol of Greekness that defined the cultural character of modern Greece. Yet in this conflict, E.D.E.S and its British allies, used the strategic advantage that the hill possesses. They outnumbered their opponents and they had the advantage of being a formal army, in contrast to their opposition. As a result, they installed heavy weaponry on top of the Acropolis in order to gain the upper hand in the war. They did not take into account the cost this action might have had to the monuments. The sacred hill had turned to a heavily armed operational centre (Lountemis 1945: 46). British soldiers, taking advantage of the prominent geographical spot, were shooting their communist targets with guns and mortars, under the direction of the British general Scobie.

«...Our Acropolis that had been respected by the time, the lightnings and the Huns, was encroached by our unworthy compatriots. And here we will speak loud about the big crime! Our Parthenon, the global altar, they made it a mortars' nest. And from there, taking advantage of our respect towards our Site, they were bombing our homes... How to reciprocate the fire? It is the act of the most pitiful murderer who kills by putting to his cover your most cherished existence» (Lountemis 1945: 46).

This is the testimony of a prominent Greek writer, Menelaos Lountemis, who was at the time a rebel in the forces of E.A.M. during this civil war. Lountemis refers to the Acropolis in a highly personal tone, using the emotional first plural «our» in order to highlight that the fighters of E.A.M in Athens held in a high esteem their ancient heritage. New evidence presented by Charalambides (2014: 118), whose research was based on unpublished military records that were released to the public recently, suggests that the sensitive approach of Lountemis emerges from a direct order not to open fire towards the Acropolis, so that Parthenon could be saved.

Yet the battle raged on. In an insightful paper, professor M. Tiverios (2013) proves that the destructions made by the German occupational forces during the three years of their stay in the Acropolis were minimal, if compared to the period of December 1944. Due to a report created by the Ephor of Antiquities in 4/1/1945 (Tiverios 2013: 186-188), we are able to trace the exact extent of destructions during this civil war period. Briefly, the Propylaea were transformed to a gun emplacement from which fire was opened. The mycenaean wall was destroyed to be used as military mound for the protection of the soldiers inside the monument. Mortars exploded next to the Propylaea, which damaged the leftmost Ionian column and the facade. Another mortar exploded in the southern aisle, generating more damage. Furthermore, the columns of the temple of Athena Nike, were damaged from mines. Moving to the Parthenon, a mortar harmed the northern wall of the alcove and the floor. In Erechtheion the allied forces placed another firing spot, using the Caryatids as defensive walls. Finally, soldiers broke into the Acropolis museum on the hilltop. Two golden plates were reported missing and a sculpture damaged. Books from the library were missing or burned.

Furthermore, pictures 2 and 3 are eloquent. Taken from the Ukrainian reporter Dimitri Kessel, a contributor to the American magazine *Life*, during the time of the events, they present convincing testimonies. The actions of the British soldiers and E.D.E.S, align with the orders that Winston Churchill gave to his general in relation to this particular conflict:

«You are responsible for the respect of order in the city of Athens. Do not hesitate to act like being in a city just conquered by military forces and in which a revolution is about to spread... It would be ideal if you succeed by avoiding bloodshed, but ideal it would be even with a bloodshed» (Churchill 1955: 254).

Yet, the Royal Aerial Force (R.A.F) did bombard Athens, an action that brought severe debates within the British parliament. Indeed, Churchill's opposition criticised the government for bombarding the city while the German occupation denied to do so (Charalambides 2014: 208). The British forces and



their allies won against the rebel army of E.A.M. Acropolis, in this instance of *histoire événementielle*, is again considered both a monument and a stronghold. It is a point of attack against the political enemies of the more powerful side of this conflict. A vantage point that would guarantee that the Western allied force prevails against the Communist ones. «Marvellous spot. We have Athens under our fire» (Tiverios 2013: 185, footnote 79). These were the words of a British soldier. Heritage seems to be a secondary resource in the conflict and if the events had turned otherwise, this civil war could have destroyed one of the most prominent heritage sites worldwide.



Picture 2: Dimitri Kessel, *A British soldier in the Acropolis museum*.  
{Source: Tiverios 2013: 201}

#### 4. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

If we compare the two examples put forward so far, what is obvious is that power defines the interpretation and use of space. Colonel Voutier in 1822 had the power and resisted the plea of some Athenians to bombard the Acropolis in order to secure victory once and for all. In the second example, the advantage lay with E.D.E.S and the British allies. They decided that the benefit of using Acropolis as a stronghold was more important than the potential damage this action could bring to the monuments.



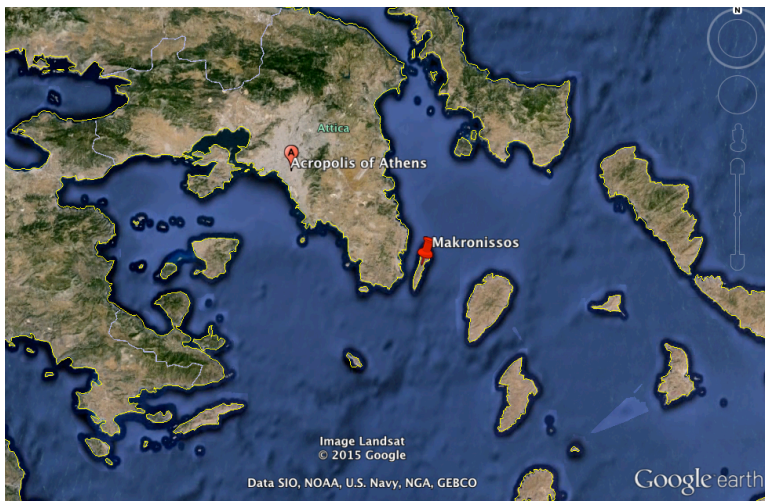
Picture 3: Dimitri Kessel,  
*British soldiers ready to fire  
next to the Parthenon.*  
{Source: Tiverios 2013: 192}

Seventy one years after the events described above, our discipline poses the same questions; who defines heritage is a question being answered by institutions nationwide and worldwide. Concerning other issues, such as who is responsible for its preservation in periods of conflict, ideas vary. The examples presented above, may indicate that other parameters, related to power might overshadow heritage and other scientific discourses, even if international rules are applied to these issues. According to Silberman (2015) heritage is central to the public discourse, because it shapes the national character. This explains perhaps why the aforementioned notions for the use of Acropolis in conflicted periods remains outside the realm of the popular narratives. Greece in the present state would not tolerate any alteration in the use of the Parthenon and there is certainly not the intention of building a stronghold on top of Acropolis. But what about in cases of conflict? This contribution suggests that the notion of heritage becomes elusive under conflicted circumstances. In cases that ideologies conflict with one another, either political or strategic power is the variable that defines the acts, without taking into consideration international rules and legislation. No need to remind ourselves of the recent examples related to the Assyrian destructions, still alive in memory.

## 5. MAKRONISSOS, 1946-1953

The final stop of this essay lies within a place of exile, the island of Makronissos. Moving away from the actual site of Acropolis, we are about to inspect its reflection in a dry island on which more than 50.000 people in total were banished, during the years of its function as a camp (Hamilakis 2002: 311). At the end of the civil war, the military camps of Makronissos were the uttermost place of 'rehabilitation' for the side that had lost. The world heritage site of Acropolis, alongside other monuments of antiquity, had its role on the turn of ex-communists towards the newly imposed national narrative. Monuments were used as a means of propaganda, towards the shaping of the new modern Greek state of anti-communist ideology. We are in front of a particular notion of heterotopy, in the sense that the physical and symbolic reflections of antiquities were transferred metaphorically into another actual locus point holding their attributed universal values. In this new locus, the prisoners were to create replicas of these monuments.

The island of Makronissos is since 1989 a historical place. It has «marked the history of modern Greece and is a place of memory not only for those who lived there during the cruelties of the period between 1946 and 1953 but for all Greeks ... for the next generations to be a symbol of conviction for the civil war, tortures, and all oppression...» (Ministerial Decision 16/5/1989). We are about to inspect the role Acropolis played as a prominent symbol of 'greekness' in the game of punishment that the winners of the civil war held over their communist opponents. It is the end of a ferocious civil war that emerged after the events of December 1944, part of which was briefly outlined above.



Picture 4: A map linking the Acropolis with the exile place of Makronissos. {Source: Google Earth}

The dissidents of the new status quo were placed in military camps, to be turned over to the new regime. Antiquities, and most prominent, the monuments of the Acropolis, were used by the state to prove that the immortal ancient Greek spirit was not compatible with modern and radical ideals (Hamilakis 2002). The evocation of monuments and the use of their materiality and their architectural superiority, purified from any historical context and compatible with the already forged national identity, have led to the creation of a discourse that would reform those of communist ideals. The truth told in Makronissos was a simple one and the communists would understand it because they were simple men (Bournazos 2000). Critical is the analogy to be made here regarding the material notion of the past. The architectural superiority of the monuments was translated falsely to the superiority of the doctrine that was implemented by the victors of the civil war. This use of the monuments' purified and superior existence and the enforcement of prisoners to create replicas, were two of the strong means of convention. Prisoners were producing architectural copies in smaller size and different materials, in order to reproduce the 'values' that the architectural monuments possessed as interpreted under the prism of the national narrative. For the regime, Makronissos was the new Parthenon and ancient Greek heritage could not have been reconciled with left-wing ideologies (Hamilakis 2002: 328). Ancient theatres, copies of the Erechtheion, the temple of Athena Nike and a model of Parthenon in the size of 1:20 were the three dimensional results of this rehabilitation project. Other 'Parthenons' were created by white rocks on the hills (Hamilakis 2002: 314-315). It does not come as a surprise that most of the monuments copied actually lie on top of the sacred hill of the Acropolis, the most prominent symbol of Hellenism. Moreover, Parthenon was the symbol of the Makronissos Forces (Bournazos 2000: 130), a fact that reveals the high impact of the monument in the lives of the prisoners. Finally, the words of an ex-communist that turned his ideals in order to leave this place complete the picture: «I tried to build a Parthenon, a Greece. Because this Parthenon, this Greece I was asked to demolish by my ex-mentors» (Bournazos 2000: 129). If we consider who used Acropolis as a military spot, during the battles of December 1944, it becomes obvious that propaganda was omnipresent and that the historical events were promoted by the side of the victors, the same who created the national narrative of Makronissos.

Part of the legitimation of the power emerged from the ruins of a distant past. Archaeology as a science, from its cultural historical interpretational framework, alongside the art historical interpretational framework, popular at the time of the events, were imposed on the ancient monuments. These tools were used as political and scientific means of convention in this ideological inquisition. «The Makronissos seminary» and «the Patriotic University of Makronissos» (Bournazos 2000: 121), as called at the time by the state, used the material culture that



archaeologists and heritage practitioners hold dear, as a means of conviction and struggle for the newly forged 'others', enemies of the state. As a result, architectural remains of astonishing beauty that were extracted from their complete historical context and projected to the present, bearing the values of Democracy, were then equal to the values of anti-communism and 'social norm'. An article in *Le Monde* (10.09.1965) extracted from Hamilakis (2002: 314) makes the case that a tourist, walking through the glory of the Greek landscape, will visit only one of the two Parthenons, the second being the one of Makronissos.



Picture 5: Propaganda photograph taken from A. Ververis, *Prisoners creating a small version of Parthenon in Makronissos, 1948-1949*. {Source: <http://www.lifo.gr/team/bitsandpieces/36763>}

## 6. DISCUSSION

Up to this point we have explored three cases that the notion of heritage is contested, when related to the notion of conflict, be it strategic, political or ideological. The aforementioned examples, inspected under their contemporary historical parameters, have led us to realise that notions over heritage values can be shifting or renegotiated during short periods of time, or even projected and propagandised to other places, to be used for a specific purpose. The intention was to put forward the history of conflicted periods as a different means of

interpretation and definition of heritage. Historiography tends to highlight specific factors that made events possible, leaving others aside, uninterpreted and forgotten. For instance, drawing on the example of Makronissos, historiography was focused on highlighting the resistance of the prisoners and the brutality of the the military forces and state. As Iliou mentions (2000: 163) we tend to forget that many of the prisoners signed the papers of repentance and left the island. This fact is evoked in order to suggest that the role of historiography is not to heroise the past but to present a holistic approach of a case. The path becomes elusive when ignoring selected parts of the narration, while black and white interpretations create the same stereotypes that one needs to avoid when trying to interpret a world heritage site.

Because of this quest for historicity, a small part of the discussion will be dedicated to the Acropolis at the date of its flourish. The construction of the monuments in the period of Pericles (4th century BC) was only a part of the architectural renovation of the city of Athens after the Persian Wars (Holtzmann 2003). The Acropolis, destroyed by the Persian army before the battle of Salamis needed to be refurbished so that the city could once more obtain its symbolic and religious centre. This resulted in the construction of the Parthenon, the Erechtheion and the temple of Athena Nike on top of the hill.

The significant architectural prestige and monumentality of the constructions raise a question, which has been answered before, but remains in the margin of the narration. Were the mines of Lavrion, alongside Athenian trade, adequate sources to create enough surplus in order to support such architectural constructions? The Athenian economy was of course more complex than this equation, but arguably without external aid, the monuments would have hardly been constructed in such a short period of time and with such delicacy. Indeed, the Athenians had created an alliance with other city-states in 478 BC, in order to protect against the imminent Persian danger. This coalition, the Delian League, resulted to the creation of a significant force. The treasury of the coalition, to which every city contributed in money, was held in the sacred island of Delos, under the protection of Apollo. In 454 BC it was transferred to the Old Temple of Athena in the Acropolis of Athens, to be protected under the aegis of the athenian goddess. At this point, the Delian League was transformed to an Hegemony of Athens, which resulted in the oppression of the smaller city states by the stronger one. Athenians were living in a democracy but their city oppressed its allies (Osborne 1994). In 449 BC Athens took 5.000 talents from the common treasury for the construction of the Parthenon, whose construction would accordingly symbolise the common victory over the Persians, therefore it should be viewed as a collective offering. Given the disagreements of other cities towards this decision, Pericles ensured them that during the present year there would be no tribute collected (Holtzmann 2003: 104).

As a result, Parthenon, the symbol of democracy, was created due to an economic surplus, arguably provided also by less powerful cities with less advanced economies. This aspect reveals another side of the history of the monument, which does not challenge its majestic architectural character but evaluates concepts that were considered attached to it. It is a heritage symbol, because of its architectural value and of the political and cultural identity that defined the city of Athens at its Golden Age. On the other hand, it could be argued that the same monument possesses a side of imperialism in itself. This way the VIth criterion for the adoption of the Acropolis in the cultural heritage catalogue is challenged. «Acropolis is directly and tangibly associated with events and ideas which have never faded in the course of history» is the exact phrase of the article (UNESCO Advisory body evaluation 1987). Moreover, the efficiency of direct application of political, moral and other related values to an architectural structure, are to be evaluated as well.

For it is in such attitudes that lies the misunderstanding. Architecture does not carry values of civilisation. The example of the Acropolis is one profound example as space was used in varied ways throughout the trajectory of time. Monuments could only be viewed as vessels of value in the context of groups of people identifying themselves, according to their beliefs concerning a monument. And the latter is related to identity-construction. As a result the question is if there is a role for history or archaeology in the contemporary practice of cultural heritage. I believe this answer lies within the interpretational framework itself. As long as experiencing heritage is more valuable than knowing historical facts and narrations related to the monuments, as long as the remains of cultural heritage are better evaluated when having traditional shops and cuisine around them and if cultural heritage is considered mainly an economic resource, humanities are marginal in the discussion. However, when it comes to unraveling stereotypes attached to the monuments and which create and generate conflicts, the role of humanities is crucial. If we are to relate the concept of heritage with periods of conflict, knowledge and holistic approaches, communicated with different ways than the one and uncontested truth of the expert, which has been reasonably challenged, then they are the only means to achieve it. But attaching social and political values in the actual monument carries danger, related to the rise of extremes in periods of crisis. The notion of acceptance of multiple interpretations, no matter how well intended it is, is in need of serious consideration because the past is mirrored in today's world. Indeed the past was never erased and as a result the 4th party in Greece's reality is one of a Neo-Nazi character and its followers believe what can eloquently be summarised as the national and cultural superiority of the Greeks. Cultural heritage and science in general, does not tolerate such interpretations, yet they exist, and in the age that experience prevails over knowledge, they find fertile ground of development.

It is in our interest to act against these notions of superiority, emerging from falsified equation between an architectural unicum and superior societal or ancestry values. Therefore, the locus of Acropolis could be viewed as a vessel of altering values through time and not as a constant material relic with single and unchanging meaning. As long as the belief that the significance of heritage locations is neither static nor inherent in the material components is shared and that such a static interpretation produces no sense or understanding of the trajectory of the past (Silberman 2015), an incorporation of the periods of conflict in the narration would be a needed addition. Realising that attitudes vary under different historical circumstances provides an insight to the variety of the interpretational framework. The rejection of the notion of heritage, or its misinterpretation, related to Acropolis as outlined in the examples, are such cases. The public character of the cultural heritage discourse could combine narrations related to conflict of ideas and interests, as well as it may incorporate the dark pages of history which were bound to ideologies gaining authority by heritage monuments. In this manner people would be able to familiarise with the darker periods of history and explore additional ways of understanding the past. The widely acknowledged and popular aspect of cultural heritage has the potential to communicate these thoughts to the wider public.

The weight should be given on the process that formed the present state of the monuments, focusing in various historical periods rather than analysing objects. The aim would be to reveal the relationships of past and present both related to material remains and intangible notions surrounding the monuments.

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